

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1 (canceled).

2 (previously presented).      A cutting tool subassembly for a folding hand tool, comprising:

- (a) a jaw having a base;
- (b) a blade assembly, including a blade carrier having a tang and a sharpened cutter mounted removably on said blade carrier;
- (c) a blade pivot joint interconnecting said jaw with said blade carrier, said jaw and said blade carrier being movable relative to each other about a pivot axis of said blade pivot joint;
- (d) a first handle connected to said base of said jaw by a first handle pivot joint and movable about said first handle pivot joint between an extended, operative position and a folded position with respect to said jaw; and
- (e) a second handle connected to said tang of said blade carrier by a second handle pivot joint and movable about said second handle pivot joint between an extended, operative position and a folded position with respect to said blade carrier, and wherein said second handle includes an abutment face at an end thereof adjacent said second handle pivot joint, and wherein said tang includes a main portion in a first plane oriented normal to said pivot axis and a leg extending laterally away from said main portion in a second plane, said leg being aligned with said abutment face and resting against said abutment face when said second handle is in said extended operative position.

3 (previously presented).      The subassembly of claim 2 wherein said second handle includes a channel having a pair of side walls and a base interconnecting said side walls and defining said abutment face.

4 (previously presented). The subassembly of claim 2 wherein said jaw is a bypass support jaw and said cutter is a bypass cutting blade arranged to cooperate with said jaw, and wherein said cutting tool is a pruning shear.

5 (currently amended). The subassembly of claim 2 wherein each of said handles defines a respective channel having a pair of channel side walls, said channels facing inwardly toward each other when said handles are in their folded positions and facing outwardly apart from each other when said handles are in their extended positions with respect to said jaw and said blade, and wherein each of said side walls of one of said handles includes cushioning portions of a resiliently soft ~~and rubber-like~~ thermoplastic elastomeric material overlying and extending along a margin thereof so as to cover said margin and present said resiliently soft ~~and rubber-like~~ thermoplastic elastomeric material along said margin for comfortable contact with a user's hand.

6 (currently amended). The subassembly of claim 5 wherein one of said channel side walls includes a supporting portion of metal and a molded shell layer of a rigid thermoplastic material attached thereto, and wherein said cushioning portions of resiliently soft ~~and rubber-like~~ thermoplastic elastomeric material are molded over said shell layer.

7 (original). The subassembly of claim 5 wherein said cushioning portions are molded onto said margins of said side walls.

8 (previously presented). The subassembly of claim 2 wherein said blade pivot joint includes a tension screw and a locknut adjustably engaged therewith, said tension screw and locknut being arranged to keep said blade assembly and said jaw suitably closely alongside each other.

9-10 (canceled).

11 (previously presented). The subassembly of claim 2, including a blade safety lock carried on said second handle pivot joint and movable between an engaged position in which said blade safety lock engages said jaw and thereby holds said jaw in a closed position with respect to said blade assembly, and a disengaged position in which said jaw and said blade assembly are free to move between said closed position and an open position, said blade safety lock being arranged with respect to said second handle so that said second handle urges said blade safety lock into said engaged position when said second handle approaches said folded position thereof.

12 -14 (canceled).

15 (previously presented). A subassembly for a folding hand tool, comprising:

- (a) a jaw having a base;
- (b) a blade including a blade base having a tang;
- (c) a blade pivot joint defining a pivot axis and interconnecting said jaw with said blade, said blade defining a blade plane normal to said pivot axis and said tang being parallel with said blade plane, said blade being movable about said blade pivot joint with respect to said jaw between an open position and a closed position;
- (d) a first handle including an abutment face;
- (e) a second handle attached to said base of said jaw;
- (f) a first handle pivot joint interconnecting said first handle with said tang, said first handle being movable about said handle pivot joint between an extended position and a folded position with respect to said blade; and
- (g) a leg attached to and extending laterally away from said tang in a plane normal to said blade plane, said leg being engaged against said abutment face when said first handle is in said extended position.

16 (previously presented). The subassembly of claim 15 wherein said first handle includes a channel having a channel base and a pair of side walls, and wherein said abutment

face is a part of said channel base and said leg extends along and in contact with said abutment face when said first handle is in said extended position.

17 (previously presented). A subassembly for a folding hand tool, comprising:

- (a) a jaw having a base;
- (b) a blade having a generally planar tang;
- (c) a blade pivot joint defining a pivot axis and interconnecting said jaw with said blade, said planar tang being oriented normal to said pivot axis and said blade being movable about said blade pivot joint with respect to said jaw between an open position and a closed position;
- (d) a first handle including an abutment face and including a channel having a channel base and a pair of side walls, said abutment face being a part of said channel base;
- (e) a second handle attached to said base of said jaw;
- (f) a first handle pivot joint interconnecting said first handle with said tang, said first handle being movable about said handle pivot joint between an extended position and a folded position with respect to said blade; and
- (g) a leg extending laterally away from said tang, said tang being oriented parallel with one of said side walls of said channel, and said leg being oriented parallel with said channel base and extending along and being engaged against and in contact with said abutment face when said first handle is in said extended position.

18 (previously presented). The subassembly of claim 17 wherein said tang of said blade and said leg are included in a single piece of sheet metal and said leg is a portion of said single piece located in a plane oriented at an appropriate angle to a plane including said tang to align said leg with said abutment face.

19 (previously presented). The subassembly of claim 15 wherein said first handle includes a channel having a pair of side walls and a channel base defining said abutment face, and wherein said tang includes a main portion and said leg extends laterally at an angle away

from said main portion and is aligned with said abutment face and rests against said abutment face when said first handle is in said extended position.

20-27 (canceled).

28(withdrawn). The subassembly of claim 2 wherein said sharpened cutter includes a hook portion at an outer end thereof, said hook portion facing openly away from said jaw and having a throat including a sharpened edge.

29 (canceled).

30 (withdrawn). The subassembly of claim 15 wherein said blade includes a hook portion at an outer end thereof, said hook portion facing openly away from said jaw and having a throat including a sharpened edge.

31 (withdrawn). The subassembly of claim 17 wherein said blade includes a hook portion at an outer end thereof, said hook portion facing openly away from said jaw and having a throat including a sharpened edge.

32-33 (canceled).

34 (previously presented) The subassembly of claim 11, wherein said blade safety lock includes a catch body that is mounted pivotably on said second handle pivot joint, said catch body defining an opening, and wherein said blade carrier has a pin projecting from said tang thereof, said pin being engaged in said opening and thereby limiting rotational motion of said catch body around said second handle pivot joint.